

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6478

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGUI

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIBREVILLE 0816

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, EAIR, EGEN, GB

SUBJ: AFRICAN WOOD ORGANIZATION

REF: BANGUI 0715

1. CREATION OF AFRICAN WOOD ORGANIZATION MAY 26 (REFTEL) GREETED WITH GREAT SATISFACTION IN LIBREVILLE. WORK OF CONFERENCE GIVEN EXTENSIVE COVERAGE IN LOCAL NEWS-PAPER GABON MATIN, WHICH ALSO CARRIED THREE LONG ANALYTICAL ARTILES ON GABONESE WOOD INDUSTRY, SOMETHING RARELY DONE BY NEWSPAPER. DESIGNATION OF LIBREVILLE AS SEAT OF ORGANIZATION WAS SUBJECT OF BROADCAST AND NEWS-PAPER EDITORIALS BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION RICHARD NGUEMA. NGUEMA STATED LIBREVILLE NOW AFRICAN WOOD CAPITAL, AND FOR FIRST TIME SEAT OF IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION. THIS RESULTS FROM POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POLICIES OF PRESIDENT BONGO, AND ECONOMIC POWER OF GABON. GABON'S ECONOMIC WEIGHT IN AFRICAN WOOD MARKET JUSTIFIES LEAD ROLE IT WILL TAKE IN NEW ORGANIZATION, WHICH ORIGINALLY WAS IDEA OF PRESIDENT BONGO, AND LARGELY CREATED BECAUSE OF HIS EFFORTS.

2. COMMENT: PRESIDENT BONGO AND GABONESE DESERVE CREDIT FOR BIRTH OF NEW ORGANIZATION SINCE THEY HAVE ALL ALONG
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BEEN DRIVING FORCE BEHIND IT. ALTHOUGH SOME SUGGEST THAT

WOOD ORGANIZATION SHOULD BECOME WOOD OPEC, THIS
NOT REALISTIC IN SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM BECAUSE OF LARGE
AMOUNTS OF WOOD PRODUCED IN DEVELOPING WORLD OUTSIDE OF AFRICA,
AND SIGNIFICANT PRODUCTION OF DEVELOPED WORLD. PRESIDENT
BONGO HIMSELF REALIZES THIS, FOR ALTHOUGH HE WANTS HIGHEST
POSSIBLE PRICE FOR GABON'S WOOD, HE HAS CONTINUALLY TALKED
ABOUT AFRICAN WOOD ORGANIZATION AS BEING VEHICLE FOR CON-
SULTATIONS BETWEEN PRODUCER AND CONSUMER. NEWSPAPER
ARTICLES DURING CONFERENCE EMPHASIZED THIS, STRESSING THAT
ORGANIZATION WOULD DO SUCH THINGS AS DISCUSS SHIPPING RATES
FOR LOGS WITH MARITIME ORGANIZATIONS, TRY TO DEVELOP NEW
MARKETS, AND CARRY OUT RESEARCH ON FINDING USES FOR VARIOUS
SPECIES OF WOOD.
COUNTRYMAN

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